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or animal. They can therefore have little appreciable dietetic importance.

(*b*) *Domestic animals.* We have seen from this account that ritual avoidances of food do not seriously affect the diet of large sections of the Bemba community. On the other hand it is not true to say that all available sources of food in the environment are exploited. The Bemba are not a pastoral people and could not keep cattle in large numbers because of the tsetse-fly. On the other hand sheep and goats are quite widely distributed in certain areas, and most households keep chickens and some pigeons. All these domestic animals are called *ifitekwa* or 'things kept', but in no case are *ifitekwa* kept primarily for meat or bred for that purpose. Goats or sheep may be given as a present to a chief or a European; dedicated to an ancestral spirit after successful recovery from illness; or given as compensation to an injured person for the loss of a limb or an eye. They may be killed and used as meat, but always on some such ceremonial occasion, never in case of pure hunger. Chickens are more numerous and less valuable, but even then a chicken is never killed 'just for food', even in the hunger season. Fowls are the ordinary present of honour for a chief or visitor of high status, and provide the ceremonial meal at a marriage or initiation ceremony. While there is no particularly sacred attitude towards chicken, a man will say, 'If I kill a chicken just to eat, I shall soon have none left.' That is to say he does not breed poultry scientifically, put down sittings of eggs, or calculate the number of chickens he may expect to get; nor does he make any attempt to feed them. Hens run about the village and lay their eggs wherever they please, and some of these sittings are finally hatched. But each new brood is regarded, with some justification, as a separate piece of good fortune for which the owner is not responsible, and which he is never certain will be repeated.[1] It is for this reason that he considers chickens should not be wasted or 'just eaten' and he will not part with eggs unless he can get money from a European for them. Teaching of scientific rearing of poultry would overcome the reluctance to use eggs. There is no fundamental magic belief at stake.

The Bemba attitude to pigeons is characteristic. These birds

[1] A number of magic rites are associated with the care of poultry such as the disposal of the eggshells at the crossroads, &c., and these may be taken as an indication of the measure of uncertainty the native feels on the question.

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magicians already described. Both are known as *ifibinda*. But naturally these specialist hunters are not common nowadays, since game restrictions prevent the killing of elephants—formerly their chief pursuit.

Every form of hunting has magic rites connected with it. Each hunter or setter of traps has his own charms (*ubwanga*) designed to make himself invisible, to draw the game to him, to slow its power of movement, &c. The animals themselves are thought to have magic attributes. Parts of their skin or bones are used as activating principles (*ifishimba*) in many charms or medicines, and many of them can only be hunted or killed after special ritual precautions have been taken to protect the hunter. All animals that attack or kill mankind are grouped in a special class known as *ifiswanga* (sing. *iciswanga*). These include the lion, leopard, cheetah, crocodile, hyena, or poisonous snakes, &c., and all these species are considered to have magic properties and to require ritual handling. Other animals are described as being *ifibanda* (sing. *icibanda*) or haunting spirits, or else are thought to turn into *ifibanda* when killed, and they are feared on that account. The bush-pig, bush-buck, hippo, rhino, eland and ant-bear are all *ifibanda*. Akin are the unlucky animals, e.g. those with the bottom teeth projecting or appearing first (*icinkula*, plur. *ifinkula*)[1] such as the zebra, the eland, haartebeest, or buffalo, which have no upper teeth in the middle of the jaw; the night owl (*ntiti mushi*) or the wild cat. None of these animals may be taken as tribute to a chief or eaten by a pregnant woman.

After killing one of the *ifiswanga* or *ifibanda*, the hunter must purify himself for fear the spirit of the animal will pursue him in dreams, bring him ill luck, or send him mad. This is also true of the elephant. The purification of a lion killer takes place at the chief's court and hereditary officials, the *Bamushika* (Kasenge and Cikutwe at Citimukulu's court), alone have the medicine required to wash the hunter.[2] But less elaborate rites are performed in the case of the leopard, crocodile, the caracal, and a bull eland with thick black tufts on its head. The ceremonies necessary after the killing of an elephant are described below.

[1] Children whose bottom teeth come through first are considered unlucky and are put to death.

[2] The *malaila* or war-song is also sung. I am indebted to Mr. T. Fox-Pitt and Mr. V. Brelsford for much confirmatory information on the magic properties of different animals.

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Men who Kill elephants must be purified

[783] 224 by special medicines (*umufinsa*, *umusaka*, *katumbi*, *kaloyansofu*, *umwenge*, &c.), and medicines are also placed on the head of the dead animal to prevent its *icibanda* returning to make the hunter mad. [83] 787] Further dangers await the man who sees the nerve of an elephant tusk before killing three elephants, and by this means becomes impotent. Such multifarious beliefs and rites could only be analysed properly in a treatise on Bantu magic, but they reflect the intense excitement of the people in the elephant hunt and all that pertains to it.

To conclude, hunting is the romance and delight of Bemba life, not a simple food-producing activity or even a very efficient one. The native hunts for food, but he hunts whether he gets game or not. Like other products of the bush, the supply of meat depends, in Bemba eyes, on the blessing of the spirits secured through the chief and hence it is subject to tribute, but the amount obtained is not sufficiently large for the development of complicated rights of economic ownership. Specialist hunters of the larger game existed, but few are still to be found. More magic surrounds the different forms of hunting than any other economic pursuit.

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bufumu ico mfumu ilelalapo). The whole of this conception must be considered against the background of the people's belief in the supernatural powers of their chiefs, and the influence of his sexual capacities on the fertility of the land.[1]

(*c*) *The purification of the priest.* Since sex intercourse makes it impossible to approach the *imipashi* or to enter their shrines, the ritual purification of the officiating priest and his wife, after the blessing of the axe or seeds, is an essential act in each economic rite. It is one which is performed before every solemn prayer or sacrifice to the *imipashi*, before the founding of a new village, an inheritance ceremony, a death or the birth of twins, &c., either by the chief, the headman, or the commoner, as the case may be. In the case of a commoner or an ordinary headman, this rite of purification (*ukuwoamya umubili*) is simple. The morning after the sexual act, the couple set on the fire the woman's marriage pot—a tiny clay pot made for her by her paternal aunt on her marriage—and they heat water in it. This the wife then pours over her husband's hands. Both then bathe in the river and return to the village, after which new fire must be lighted in the hut. Sex taboos are kept by the pair until the ceremony in question is over. In the case of the chief, and particularly the Citimukulu, this rite is, however, exceedingly complex. It involves the simultaneous ritual intercourse of the chief and the 'wife of the land' (*umukolo ua calo*), and the Cimba and the Cikutwe with their respective head wives in huts built specially for the purpose. Afterwards twelve or fifteen of the *bakabilo* must assist, each with his own hereditary part, in the purification ceremony and the lighting of the new fire. Without purifying his body the chief can never enter his *benye* house or use his powers over the land to the full, but the complication and expense of a rite which requires the simultaneous presence of so many officials is one of the reasons why the full ceremonial of tree-cutting or first-fruits described later is so rarely performed nowadays, when chiefs are impoverished and cannot always command the loyalty of their *bakabilo*.

(*d*) *The divination rite.* Except in the case of first-fruit rites, each ceremony, whether tree-cutting or blessing of seeds, is followed by some act of divination in which the intentions of the *imipashi* are revealed to their descendants. Here the element of individual doubt and uncertainty is apparent again. There are

[1] Cf. p. 249.

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789 [754] witchcraft, handled by people believed to have supernatural powers.

(ii) *The magic influence of sex, blood and fire* which, when brought 789 into wrongful contact with each other, are thought to be highly 831 dangerous to every Bemba, but particularly to babies and young 372 children, who are believed to be vulnerable to so many dangers; and to chiefs, on whom the prosperity of the land is held to depend. This system of beliefs is extremely complex, and yet it is necessary to try to understand it, if the meaning of the chisungu is to be grasped. The dogma relating sex and fire is the *idée maîtresse* behind most of the ritual behaviour of the Bemba.

834 Briefly speaking, sex relations according to Bemba dogma make 784 a couple 'hot'. In this state it is dangerous for them to approach ● 783 the ancestral spirits in any rite of prayer or sacrifice, and any chief 622 or headman who attempted to perform such a ceremony without purification would run the risk of bringing disaster on his district. [783] The chief's shrines are guarded by old women or hereditary priests who keep sex taboos. For the chief to be casual in keeping sex taboos, or to approach his ancestors without purification is 'to spoil the land' (*ukuconaula icalo*).

831 All persons of sex maturity are in fact distinguished by a special 372 term (*mo kuloko*) and are excluded from a number of rites on the 784 ground that they are 'hot', or are likely to be 'hot'. Such people 783 can pollute the fireplace of a hut by touching it, and then a baby 854 fed with gruel cooked on this fire might sicken and die. Parents 846 who do not purify themselves after intercourse run the risk of killing their children by accidentally touching the family hearth. Adulterers are more dangerous still, as they cannot purify themselves since the necessary rite can only be carried out by husband and wife. Small babies and their mothers are therefore kept away from beer drinks where 'bad' people congregate drinking round the fire without care. The baby's gruel is often cooked on a separate hearth and in a separate pot. The art of Bemba motherhood in fact consists very largely in guarding children from danger from fire. A newly born baby is 'unripe' (*mubishi*) and is in a specially precarious position until it has been 'taken' by its parents (*ukupoka umwana*) by an act of intercourse and the lighting of new fire, when it is a few months old. To save the baby, it must be 'brought to the fire' by being held over the flames of a doctored

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fire when it is first placed to the breast, or when the cord falls off (*ukumwalwila*). If its father is away and the ceremony of 'taking the child' cannot take place, the baby is given medicine (*umuti wa kuzikya*). The mother and the midwife extinguish the old fire, mud the hut and light a new fire. Then they carry the baby to the men's shelter where there are presumably many youths 'with heat' or 'with bad things', or to a kitchen where the people have been known not to have done the purification ceremony. In this dangerous company, they give the baby gruel cooked on the new fire to make it immune. The rite of *ukumukokotola* is a ceremonial spitting of raw food on the baby by a menstruating woman so that the baby can be safely touched by a woman who is in this condition. All these methods are believed to secure immunity on homoeopathic principles.

The chief's sacred fire, the fire of the land, must be protected with even greater care. It is placed in a separate hut and watched by a senior wife, past child bearing. The chief's food is usually cooked by a man and not a woman.

To remove the dangers due to sex intercourse a special ceremony is required and this is one which can only be performed by a legally married couple. Hence the close links between the rules of ritual and those governing marriage ties, and the great importance of magic belief in determining the strength of the marital relationship. At marriage each girl is presented by her paternal aunt with a miniature pot about 2½ inches in diameter which must be guarded with the utmost secrecy. With this the purification rite is carried out. It is filled with water and placed on the fire, man and wife each holding the rim. Water from the pot is then poured by the wife on to her husband's hands, and some say on to the wife's as well. New 'pure' fire is then relit either by means of fire-sticks, or, as is usual nowadays, with matches. This apparently simple rite is the essential act which removes the condition of hotness from the body of man and wife and renders them free to touch a hearth with impunity or to approach the ancestral spirits. Some say that it used to be performed after each sex act and others that it was merely done before some ceremony of special undertaking such as harvesting. It is still spoken of with the utmost secrecy and shyness and still survives even in the face of strong opposition from

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833 missionaries. In the ritual life of a chief the pot ceremony is of par-
783 ticular importance.[1]

581 The ritual links uniting a married couple are thus particularly strong in this society. It is husband and wife who perpetually carry out the dangerous act of sex together, who thereby put themselves in each other's power, and who depend on each other for the ceremonial purification which neither can carry out alone.[2] The marriage relationship is ritualised from the start.

372 On important ritual occasions, such as the 'warming' of a new
783 village site, the installation of a chief, a marriage, a death, or the protection rites for a young child, the old fire must be extinguished and a new fire lit with fire-sticks or matches, and the floor of the hut freshly mudded over. These are signs that the pollution is definitely removed. The fire is also harmed by objects or persons that are 'cold'. Contact with a dead body makes a fire cold, or
[841] contact with a menstruating woman, who is described in polite speech as 'being in a state of coldness' (*Akuba na mpepo*) or as 'fearing fire' (*atina umulilo*). People who eat food cooked on the fire by such women are liable to illness.

841 The most constant danger to the family fire is in fact the touch
372 of the housewife herself, when she is passing through her periods. Then she must be careful not to touch the family fire that her husband or her children use. She has her own small fire separate from the main fire, and if it goes out, she can only borrow from a woman past child-bearing or a girl who has not reached puberty.
[833] Intercourse with her husband would be almost unthinkable for her during these days and there are heavy penalties attached to the showing of the menstrual blood by accident. A girl who allowed a drop of blood to fall on her husband's bed or who washed in the stream where others washed is thought to threaten illness to those near her. I was told she would be punished by her fellows by being made to sit over a fireplace till her flesh was scorched.

At the end of a period the old fire is extinguished; a ritual act of
[784] intercourse takes place and a new fire lit (*ukusungulula*), the word used for the similar purification performed after a village has been polluted by death.

[1] Cf. my *Land, Labour and Diet in Northern Rhodesia*, 1939, p. 361.

[2] Only the head wife of a polygamist can perform the pot ceremony for him. Hence the legal and ritual difference in status between her and her co-wives.

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A murderer or a lion-killer can also harm a fire by being 'hot'. 783
They have done something fierce and must not eat cooked food 784
without purification. The clue to the solution of a murder case
trial during my stay in the country was discovered by a Bemba
detective who overheard the statement that on such and such a
night, *X* and *Y* did not eat with the other men. 'They were eating
their food cold'. In other words they had not yet been purified,
and could not come near the common fire and hence could be pre-
sumed to be murderers.

It is difficult to exaggerate the strength of these beliefs, or the 372
extent to which they affect daily life. In a village at cooking-time 783
young children are sent here and there to fetch 'new fire' from
neighbours who are ritually pure. Women in their periods call
their sisters to cook for them. Young married women are seen
sitting outside beer parties, and explain 'I have a young baby'. All
the medicines have been taken and the protective rites done, but
there is always the possibility that an adulterer might touch the
fire when he is drunk and the beer might be polluted thereby.

There are other sources of danger. The first intercourse with a 833
girl after her initiation ceremony has been performed is considered 622
to be a perilous act. It is carried out with special ritual precautions
and in the case of a chief, it must be undertaken by a special court
official, (*kasala*), who takes the risk on himself. This man must 'eat
the chisungu' of the girl before she is taken to the chief. Yet, in
spite of this danger, it is this act above all others which initiates
the ritual relationship between husband and wife and it is valued
on this account, so that a young man can claim damages if his [836]
betrothed has been seduced after her initiation ceremony, but
before the marriage, for it is said that the chisungu of the girl has
been stolen from him in this case.

One of the most fatal acts of all was for a girl to bear a child 848
before she had been initiated or before one of the more abbrevi- 777
ated rites now performed at puberty was carried out. Her child
would then be a creature of ill-omen—*mo mputulo*—who would
bring misfortune on any village in which it lived. The child would
be a portent of evil. It would stop rain falling. It would make the
granaries empty quickly. It might bring dissension. The father
and mother of such a child should therefore be driven out

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into the bush with their baby to save the community from danger. The penalties which fall on those who come in contact with polluted fire are always envisaged as illnesses, mainly of the chest (*cifuba*) and such complaints are very common in Lubemba as we saw. It is important to notice too that the punishment falls on the innocent and not the guilty. The adulterous woman who touches her hearth-stone causes her husband to fall ill 'of the chest' if he accidentally comes near the fire. The father who is 'impure' through illicit intercourse 'kills his child with fire' (*ukumuipaya umulilo*) so that the baby starts to waste away and then to die.

The reader will have gathered that strong mystic links are thought to exist between husband and wife. Though marriage appears unstable in Lubemba compared with the unions contracted by some of the patrilineal Bantu in South Africa, yet the destinies of husband and wife are mysteriously joined. If one partner dies, the other must sleep with some social equivalent of the dead—a brother or uterine nephew or a maternal grandson in the case of a dead man, or a sister or granddaughter in the case of a dead woman. This is to 'take the death off' the living partner. A member of the dead man or woman's matrilineage has to fetch back his or her spirit from the living spouse and makes him or her free to remarry.

But this is only one example of the belief that the guardian spirit (*mupashi*) and the blood of man and woman mix in sex relationships. Women of loose morals in Northern Rhodesian towns are said to bear few children because they 'mix the blood' of Bemba and men of other tribes. Again, a man who sleeps with two women unites the three in a relationship that is magically perilous. The blood is mixed (*mulopa wasakanya*). If woman *A* commits adultery with *B* and the legitimate wife of *B* sees the blood of *A* from a scratch, a tattooed mark or during menstruation, then she, the guiltless partner, will die at once unless saved by the right medicine. So also if *X*, a man, sleeps with the wife of *Y*, and *Y* sees the blood of *X* by misadventure, then *Y*, the guiltless partner, will die.

For mother and daughter to sleep with the same man, albeit unknowingly, is a terrible thing. For an adulterer to pass the dead body of his mistress's husband, or any other man who has slept

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769 living. It also emphasises the magical powers associated with sex
831 which is linked with feelings of guilt and anxiety expressed in the taboos clustered round marriage, childbirth and the rearing of children. This feeling of guilt is so widely diffused that innocent
● [783] people are thought to suffer from the magical results of a sex misdemeanour committed by someone else.

581 These beliefs support the institution of marriage since safety
789 from magical danger is acquired by means of a ceremony which can
837 only be carried out by a man's head wife. No Bemba supposes that a husband will be kept from adultery by this means, but the legal wife is the only person who can secure him and those near him from the resultant punishment.

622 The reader is asked to bear in mind, without attempting further
372 analysis, the association that exists in Bemba ideology between
831 chieftainship, fire, sex and power to influence the fertility of the
789 land and its people, and to remember that these powers are hurt
753 by blood, intercourse out of marriage, death, murder, lion-killing and all cold, terrible or 'bad things' (*fibi*). Fertility which is so much desired is produced by conduct pleasing to the ancestors, and to senior and especially paternal relatives, the blessings of persons in authority and the carrying out of the ritual of marriage. Illness is inflicted usually on the innocent party, by sex relations out of marriage without ritual purification, by bad conduct, and because of injury to people who, since they have died in a state of righteous indignation, will 'come back' to haunt the family which did them wrong.

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

612 The most characteristic features of the Bemba social structure
611 are its hierarchical and authoritarian type of government, of which
591 the apex is a paramount chief believed to have supernatural powers; and its system of matrilineal descent with uxorilocal marriage.

643 The political structure of the Bemba is a centralised one. Its unity under a single head, the *Citimukulu*, was achieved, in 1931 at any rate, because of a belief in the spiritual powers the king was

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than required as a duty. The *butwa* society of the Western Congo is a case in point.

(*e*) *Maturation rites dissociated with puberty.* The complete separation of puberty rites proper from those of social maturation is seen in those societies where the one is followed by the other. Among the Akamba of Kenya for instance there were triple ceremonies for boys and girls; these included simple puberty ceremonies for individuals followed by the 'small initiation ceremonies' at which circumcision took place, and the 'great initiation ceremonies', only performed occasionally, for adult men who had reached special wealth and honour in the tribe.

881 The Bemba chisungu is an individual nubility rite practised for
783 each girl, or for two or three girls together and it is preceded by a short puberty ceremony proper. When a girl knows that her first period has come she tells older women and they must 'bring her to the hearth' again (*ukumufishyo peshiko*), or 'show her the fire' (*ukumulanga umulilo*) since her condition has made her 'cold'. This is done by rites which vary slightly from locality to locality. The *ukusolwela* ceremony is one in which doctored seeds are cooked on a fire and the girl must pull them out and eat them burning hot. In another rite she is washed with medicine cooked in a special pot and she drinks this medicine too. She is then isolated indoors for a day or more and fed with a small ball of millet porridge cooked in new fire so that she may be made free to eat again without harming herself or others. This is the usual Bemba way of returning to the community a person who has passed through an unusual or dangerous state.

881 The girl then waits till it is convenient for her chisungu cere-
584 mony to be danced. I call this latter a nubility rite since it is clearly considered as a preliminary to the marriage ceremony; indeed, Bemba accounts frequently confuse the two. Formerly the girl came to her chisungu already betrothed, and this is usually the case today. The bridegroom plays a part in the rite in his own person, or is represented by his sister. He contributes to the cost of the rite by paying the mistress of the ceremonies. The chisungu protects the young couple against the magic dangers of first intercourse and gives the bridegroom the right to perform this act, which is thought to be entirely different from all that follow it, in

The Ceremony

881 They also sang again and again a song about the white egret (No. 46) as they surrounded the whitened forms of the girls and danced them back to the village.

As we came near the houses men sitting in the doorways of their huts lowered their eyes ostentatiously as we passed.

We assembled at the initiation hut and began again songs and offerings of respect to the *nacimbusa* in order of precedence. All the relatives in the hut were touched with white clay. The girls were then led to the house of the village headmen who 'spat the blessings of the spirits' on them, (*ukupala amate*).

[302] (This ceremony, literally 'going to whitewash', seemed to be thought rather romantic and interesting by the women. They referred to the girls throughout in an almost sentimental way as English women speak of the beauty of brides on their wedding day. 'We make the girls white. We make them beautiful.' 'We make them white like egrets.' 'Yes, they are white now from the stain of the blood.' 'It is finished now, the thing that was red.')

[783 784] The *ukuya kumpemba* seems to mark a definite stage in the ritual. It is a rite of purification from the menstrual blood and a form of beauty magic. It is followed by the second calling of the blessings of the ancestral spirits.

FIFTEENTH DAY

The shelter and the screen

881 342 Nangoshye and a few helpers went out in the middle of the morning to collect stout logs in the bush. By the early afternoon I found them hard at work setting a grass roof on five strong uprights to form a small shelter of the type commonly found in Bemba villages. The supports and roof were covered with clay and the whole stuck with the inevitable beans, pumpkin seeds, red cam wood and white flour. On top of the roof a stick was frayed out to form a plume, or *ngala*. The whole erection was described as an *nsaka*, or a man's shelter, or an *ichenje*, the special term used for the shelter built by the head army captain in a chief's village. This was a place of protection, a spot where the soldiers gathered together in the evening.

(The symbolism was rather obscure, not only to me, but also apparently to many of the women engaged in making the shelter.

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[35] [35] then put to stew in water after the ordinary Bemba fashion of cooking chicken.

By now every cock in the village was crowing lustily and the women poured out of the hot smoky hut in to the bitter morning air of the cold season of the year. Everyone was drunk. Everyone was happy. Uncouth figures staggered round the village, like some satyr rout, laughing and singing:

> '*Mr. Cock*
> *When you come, have gone,*
> *Let us come and play.*' (No. 36)

The words had a catchy tune, and the drum beat went at the rear of the laughing crowd. A few men came to their hut doors blinking sleepily. They looked on acidly as people do when they have been woken from their beds by other people's merriment. At last the noise died down and only the oldest of the *bwacimbwa* still ran round the village gardens alone singing in a cracked, drunken voice:

> '*You have slept with the chirungu child,*
> *You have slept with the lion.*' (No. 37)

The communal eating of the chickens

At about eleven, we were called again to the initiation hut. A big pot of porridge was being made to be eaten with the ceremonial chickens. The paternal grandmother of one of the girls was in charge. She pretended to hand a spoon of porridge to each and then took it back. Then came the common Bemba rite known as ● [783] *ukulishya* by which those who have undergone a ceremony or kept taboos are made free to eat again with the rest of the community. Such people cannot touch food with their hands. They must be made free to do so. In this case, Nangoshye touched the girls' lips with the porridge and then made a big ball of it which each had to swallow whole. They were now free to eat with other people and join the ordinary life of the community again.

The porridge was then divided into three portions for the elders, the children and for the *bwacimbwa*. Nangoshye carefully kept aside a wing of chicken for each girl and the rest of the stew was divided out as relish for the 25 or 30 women present.

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The Ceremony

The bathing of the girls

The two girls were then taken down to the river to be ceremonially bathed—another rite which follows most Bemba ceremonies. A little beer must still have been hidden away in the village for some of the older women seemed happily drunk. They did intoxicated solo dances in the mud on the water's edge singing:

'We have gone to fill the pot.'

They put grass bracelets round the girls' arms saying that they were an earnest of the many things their husbands would give them later.

NINETEENTH DAY

At about five next morning, I was woken by soft clapping outside my tent. I lifted the flap and there knelt the *banacisungu*, washed and shaved and with shining new white handkerchiefs on their heads. They were still in the humble, submissive attitude with eyes on the ground but they answered me quickly with the shy smiles and the little courtesies expected of polite young Bemba girls, their faces for the first time alive and responsive. In fact, the phrase 'rite of transition' began to have a new meaning for me when I remembered the dirty frightened exhausted creatures who had been badgered and pushed through the chisungu weeks, and compared them with these demure and shy young brides. They begged for little presents. Later I watched them kneel and clap obeisance outside each hut in the village. 'They are submitting themselves to the elders' was Nangoshye's proud comment. 'They show they are willing to work for us.'

TWENTY-THIRD DAY

The congratulations (*ukushikula*)

Just as Bemba rites of transition are followed by the *kulishya* or the giving of the freedom to eat, so they are also usually followed by the *ukushikula* or presentation to the community. The chisungu candidate, the bride after her wedding ceremony, and the chief or headman who has succeeded to a new title are all submitted to the same rite. The person who has changed his status is brought out of his hut and placed on a new mat outside its door. He is bathed,

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firmly convinced that the conduct of each partner to a marriage has a magical effect on the health of the other, and even on that of a third party who commits adultery with one or the other.

If a man dies, his spirit is thought to linger round the body of his widow, and to be a potential danger to anyone subsequently marrying her. The same is true of a widower on the death of his wife. It seems clear that the clan of the man or woman is involved, since, unless the wife is inherited, a substitute from the dead partner's clan is required to sleep with the surviving partner in order to fetch his or her spirit back to the clan.

One could interpret this requirement by saying that the spirit of a dead Bemba is thought to haunt the living if the departed man or woman has been defrauded of his or her rights. If this interpretation is correct, it can be assumed that a man who sleeps with the widow before the necessary ceremony of 'taking off the death' has taken place is regarded as defrauding the dead man of the marital rights he had acquired. The clan brother who sleeps with the widow to take off the death which lingers on or around her presumably acts as the social equivalent of the dead man and not on behalf of the clan as a whole; the matrilineal clan or lineage does not normally act as a corporate group with regard to the marriage of one of its male members, although the woman's lineage, in the person of her mother's brother, does assume such a position of control.

Should it be objected that the initial rights of husbands over wives in Bemba society are much less substantial than those of husbands in the patrilineal bride-wealth tribes, this must be admitted; yet in Bemba society, perhaps just because of the lack of durable property in which status can be expressed, there is a tremendous insistence upon points of precedence and honour, and fights over what seem to us to be trivial claims and dues. So the apparent contradiction between the strength of the mystic links between spouses and the weakness of the economic ties between them is not so surprising a paradox in terms of Bemba culture as it would be in our own. Moreover, however uncertain a husband's rights as father may be, his sexual rights over his wife are never questioned. It is these which are at issue in the ceremony of 'taking off the death'. These interpretations, however, are guesswork;

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Unconscious Tensions and Conflicts

Such suggestions cannot be dignified by the name of hypotheses. They are no more than likely guesses. It remains for the sociologist to follow them up in similar societies, and for the psycho-analyst to interpret them in terms both of universal symbolism and the analysis of Bemba dreams and other expressions of unconscious fantasies or conflicts.

PRAGMATIC EFFECTS

The intentions, conscious or unconscious, of the performers of a rite must be carefully distinguished from the actual effects they may produce, either on the state of mind of individuals, or on the working of particular institutions. The Trobriand islanders practise love magic in the firm belief that the saying of certain words or the use of certain herbs makes a man invincibly attractive to a woman, or a woman to a man. The magic itself does not produce this effect, of course, but the fact is that lovers who believe themselves to be irresistible act in such a way that they actually prove to be so. All types of ritual can be similarly regarded as social mechanisms which produce certain results in the individual or the group, quite apart from the manifest or latent content of the performer's beliefs. It is as a social mechanism that the ritual of different cultures shows such similarities. Symbols differ widely, so do beliefs, and there is an almost bewildering variety of ceremonial sequences, but as methods of social action ritual types are not in reality very numerous, and they will be found to conform to certain general rules.

From this point of view we can distinguish in the chisungu a number of ritual devices that are very widespread, and which here produce effects on the individual girl, on her kindred, and on the institution of marriage, and in the maintenance of Bemba values. The first of these may be described as the device of the 'marked stage' which seems to me typical of all rites of role assumption. For whatever conscious or unconscious reasons, the Bemba girl and her family approach the time of puberty with apprehension and anxiety. The series of ceremonial acts of her chisungu may be regarded as giving her the assurance that she is fit to assume her

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new role and providing an acceptable proof that she has successfully reached a new stage in life. She has been gradually made free to eat the different foods of the tribe and to prepare them, and the different ceremonial acts have shown everybody that this process is complete. The bride is made indubitably clean. She has the right weapons to protect her from the magical dangers of her new life.

If the marked stage is a ritual device which is common to all rites of role assumption and status change, the device of the ordeal or omen is probably more widely associated with such rites than has been assumed. The chisungu is a test in the eyes of the performers. Whatever her doubts or fears the girl has jumped the faggots successfully; she has caught the *njelele* insect and killed the chickens. The teen-ager in our own society has no such tangible proof that she is actually a 'grown-up' and can safely and successfully behave like one.

The device of the public pronouncement is similarly a common ritual act in most ceremonies of role assumption. We saw that the Bemba girl on the last night of her chisungu was obliged to handle each model and to sing each song herself, and I have suggested that it is impossible to decide whether such mimetic acts should be considered as magic rites intended to make a new relationship, or as legal acts involving the girl in a public assumption of her new duties. It is noticeable that in the analysis of rites given on page 140, by far the greater number of the pottery *mbusa* are those referring to the obligations of husband and wife; these are the *mbusa* which the initiation candidates themselves have to handle, while singing the accompanying songs. From the girl's point of view such speculations are perhaps irrelevant. All such public pronouncements must be regarded as means by which the girl gains confidence that she is now able to act on her own. This is probably the first time the girl has been asked to announce her individual responsibility in any way, after a life very free of individual undertaking or responsibility in the midst of an extended family.

I stress the devices which seem to me to contribute to the individual security of the girl because rites of passage have been considered since the days of Van Gennep almost entirely as a means of creating or representing group ties. This aspect is of course of great importance to the sociologist, but it should not be studied to

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Appendix B

X 881 533 778 Some informants said the girl was to be taught cooking; and others that the hearthstones represented the settled married life.

No. 62. *The pot* (*mutondo*). The girl is to carry water and look after the house.

No. 63. *The cardinal bird* (*kabangula*). This is a small white bird with red spots on it. It represents the *nacimbusa*, since it has a red crest like the plumes of the *nacimbusa* in old days.

No. 64. *The hyena* (*cimbwi*). The girl is told not to steal like the hyena.

No. 65. *Cibone Musuba*. This is a conical-shaped model covered with small projections.

It is said to represent a tree and it is also the name of the beautiful head-wife of a legendary chief. The husband is to look upon his wife as the most beautiful of all women just as the chief preferred his head-wife to all others.

No. 66. *The centipede* (*congolo*). This is an animal about six inches long like an enormous caterpillar, which appears with the rains. The *congolo* has many legs.

[783 845] The song warns the girl to perform purification after twins; or, according to another account, she is warned not to have intercourse too frequently or she will have twins—multiple births like the many legs of the caterpillar.

769 778 Spirits are also worshipped, as has been mentioned, at the chief's relic huts, at the sites of dead chiefs' villages, which are reverenced spirit centres, and at remarkable natural objects such as [illegible] falls (*ngulu*) which are also thought to be spirit centres. Major chiefs [782] are buried in a sacred grove guarded with great care by a priest, the *shimwalule*. This is the home of the most powerful tribal spirits and an animal used to be sacrificed here on the rare occasions when drought was [787] threatened. The spirits of the chiefs also manifest themselves in the presence of possessed men and women who prophesy and heal. Ancestral spirits are approached by the man or woman who has succeeded to their name and guardian spirit, that is to say, the head of a small local lineage, a headman or a chief.

769 782 783 Ancestral spirits are addressed after a ritual sex act between the officiant and his wife, followed by ceremonial purification. The spirits are addressed by name and some form of sacrifice, e.g. beer, cloth, flour and chickens, is offered to them.

(c) MAGIC AND WITCHCRAFT

789 Bemba and Bisa believe in the potency of *bwanga* which may be translated as "magic". Bemba magical rites depend for the most part on medicine (*muti*), usually part of a plant or tree, sometimes with the addition of energizing charms giving potency to the medicine. Words are sometimes used but, as with the Azande, there is less insistence on and less importance attached to the spell than to the rite and the medicines. It is the magician (*Ng'anga*) who procures and uses the medicine and from whom it may be purchased. To ensure effectiveness the *Ng'anga* must invoke *Lesa*, without whose consent the medicines are thought to be ineffectual.

Magic is used for general protective purposes - to ensure fertility, good health and luck, to give staying power to food. In the economic sphere magic seems to be used less among the Bemba than the Bisa. Richards suggests that the greater development of the ancestral cult among the former is the reason for this.(1)

754 787 Magic is also used in divination. The commonest form of divination is the rubbing of an axe over a skin until it sticks in answer to a question, and boiling of medicine in a pot until the mixture bubbles over one side or the other side. Another characteristic form of Bemba divination is the hunting ritual used to ascertain the cause of a person's death, according to whether a male or female animal is first driven into the hunting nets. This rite can be used as a preliminary test for witchcraft. In the old days the *lilemfia*, or war fetish, originally obtained from the Lunda chiefs near Lake Mweru was employed. This was a horn placed on a spike which was [278] thought only to work if smeared with the blood of a human victim. *Mwafi*, the poison used as a test for witchcraft from the Southern Sudan to Southern Rhodesia, was used by the senior chiefs in this area.

754 Evil magic, or sorcery, was distinguished as *buloshi*, a term which covers witchcraft, in the sense of inborn power, as well as the manipulation

(1) Richards, 6, 1939, pp.356, 187.

791 778 The *ng'anga* (magicians) of whose activity little is known, dwelt in a banana grove just south of the capital which no outsiders could enter on pain of death.(1)

782 789 787 [726] Human sacrifices were made at the capital.(2) Victims were prisoners of war and, failing them, the Kazembe's own subjects. Human blood, hearts and entrails are mentioned among the ingredients of which medicines were made.(3) Horns containing medicine were supposed to give protection from witchcraft. Before any hazardous enterprise - war, hunting, travel - was undertaken, an oracle was consulted(4) and, if prospects looked auspicious, a medicine was prepared.(5)

264 643 787 The Kazembe was said to receive warnings of hostile machinations in dreams. If he dreamt of someone more than once this was a sign that the man was plotting against him and must be put to death.(6) Crawford was informed that the Kazembe was ritually insulted during his meals, and he describes this in some detail.(7) "The king eats in a mysterious mode called *kapoaio*... The 'old doctors' cursed him while he ate, his face veiled: 'Kazembe should die! He is no man! A beast! Kill the beast, oh! son of Temena (his mother's name)' ". The *mondo* was sounded to let people know that Kazembe was having his meal, and no one else was allowed to eat at the same time.

834 783 Ritual cleansing is prescribed after sexual intercourse. A man who kills a lion has to be washed in *nshipa* medicine by the headman before he can enter the village, and may not eat or speak till this has been done.

226 789 [784] [834] A wealth of ritual attached to fishing. Ritual authority was vested in the Shila "owners of the land".(8) The ceremony of *ukufungule sabi* (unlocking the fish) was performed annually towards the middle of the dry season on all the waters except the Luapula which "belongs to God". Bits of medicine were attached to the nets in order to ensure a good catch and prevent the nets from being torn. Charms were worn by fishermen or suspended at the bows to protect the canoe from being capsized by hippo or crocodiles. When the canoe was first launched the women sprinkled it with a little cassava flour to ensure plentiful catches. A women, particularly when carrying a child, was forbidden to step over a net. Sexual relations were tabooed when the fish were being poisoned. Lake Mweru was apparently never crossed south of Kilwa island, according to Livingstone.(9) At the "cursing" ceremony on Lake Mweru the dead men drowned in the lake were called by name and reprimanded.(10) Those who came safe ashore after their boats had foundered were greeted with a deliverance song and led in a thanksgiving procession.(11)

(1) Gamitto, I, p.358.
(2) Pereira puts the number of human victims at twenty a day (Livingstone, I, p.265). This is probably no more trustworthy than is his statement that Kazembe's army numbered 20,000 trained soldiers. R.J. Moore discusses human sacrifices as if at the time he wrote (1937) they were still common and an essential part of the salt-making ritual. The victim, according to him, is "nowadays usually a child".
(3) Burton, p.126.
(4) ibid., p.228.
(5) ibid., p.128.
(6) Livingstone, I, p.277.
(7) Crawford, 2, p.104.
(8) Livingstone, op.cit., p.252.
(9) op.cit., p.269.
(10) Crawford, op.cit., p.105.
(11) ibid., pp.105-6.

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in prayer. When a man or woman dies, his or her social personality must be immediately perpetuated by a successor who passes through a special ritual (*ukupyanika*) and thus acquires the name, the symbols of succession (a bow for a man and a girdle for the woman), and the *umupashi* of the dead man. By this social identification, a man assumes the latter's position in the kinship-group, uses the same kinship terms and, in the case of a chief, it is almost impossible to tell when a man is describing incidents which took place in his own life or those of an ancestor two or three generations dead. So important is this social perpetuation of the dead considered that immediately after a death, before the successor has finally been appointed, a small boy or girl, usually a maternal grandchild, is chosen to inherit the name of the deceased temporarily (*ukunwa menshi*, 'to drink the water'). He or she is given some small piece of the latter's property and thereafter addressed as grandfather or grandmother, or whatever the right kinship term may be.

In the same way, a chief, once he has succeeded to the name, the spirit, and the sacred relics of his predecessor, has magic influence over the productive capacity of his whole territory. His ill health or death, his pleasure or displeasure, his blessings or curses, can affect the prosperity of the people, and even his sex life reacts on the state of the community.[1] For a chief to break a sex taboo is an act which may cause calamity to the whole people, and the rites by which he is purified after sexual contacts form one of the most important elements in the politico-religious ceremonial requiring the participation of thirty or forty hereditary officials (*bakabilo*) in the case of the paramount. Conversely, legitimate sex intercourse, especially as prescribed on certain ritual occasions, may actually be a health-giving influence. Any headman has a certain degree of supernatural influence in his own village as the successor to his predecessor's *umupashi*, but a chief has considerably more. For all these reasons, ritual precautions guard the sacred person of a chief. Special taboos must be kept to preserve the ritual purity of the ruler's sacred fire, and his sacred

[1] There are rumours that chiefs were throttled by their hereditary councillors when they were obviously sick unto death, for fear they took 'the land' into the grave with them. This information was sent me by Mr. T. Fox-Pitt after I had left the country and was afterwards checked by Mr. Godfrey Wilson. In fact it is probable that in the old days the Bemba chiefs would fall under Frazer's definition of a 'divine king'.

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food, and to protect his person and that of the sacred relics from the contagion of illness, death, or sex defilement.[1]

The ritual by which a successor to the chieftainship is converted from an ordinary individual to a ruler with almost divine powers, has a good deal of political importance. It confers authority on the priests—in this case hereditary officials (*bakabilo*) who carry it out—and gives them, as we shall see, considerable power to check the chief himself. The complete ritual by which the *umupashi* of a dead ruler is liberated to guard the land he governed, and the new heir is installed, is too complex to describe here and now. Briefly speaking, it consists of the desiccation of the body during a period of a year, from one kafir-corn harvest to the next; its burial in a special grove (with human sacrifices in the old days); and the building of a shrine on the site of the deserted capital. To make the new chief, *bakabilo* must preside at the installation of a new great wife, arrange for the sexual purification of the royal pair, and the lighting of their new sacred fire.[2] They must hand over to the heir the heirlooms (*babenye*) of which they have been in charge during the interregnum, and must finally found a new village and build again the sacred huts in which the relics are to be kept. Such a ceremonial may take eighteen months to two years and the participation of all the *bakabilo* and hereditary buriers (*bafingo*) in the case of the paramount; a lesser time and very many fewer priestly dignitaries in the case of the territorial chiefs. The secrecy and awe surrounding these ceremonies is, I believe, one of the ways by which the people's reverence for their chiefs is maintained.

(*b*) *Legal Rules of Descent and Succession.* Against this background of beliefs as to the continuity between one generation and another, the nature of descent and succession is defined exactly by legal rule. Descent in the royal family is reckoned to the time of first occupation of the country, and twenty-five to thirty Citimukulus are remembered. In the case of a territorial chief, the line of ancestors is not so long, and most are described as having been 'born in the country'. Most of the names honoured are those of men but some are those of women, and it seems that

[1] cf. my *Land, Labour and Diet in Northern Rhodesia* (1939), chap. xvii.

[2] Hence the importance of the great wife of the chief (*umukolo ua calo*) in the political life of the tribe and the belief that her behaviour also influences the welfare of the land.